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R 101315Z MAY 06  
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2343  
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SAN SALVADOR 001225

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [ES](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#)  
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON OHCHR FIELD PRESENCE  
(EL SALVADOR)

REF: SECSTATE 73151

¶1. According to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) website, the UNHCR no longer maintains a full office in El Salvador, but has a representative to assist in the processing of refugees. The Political Section contacts the UNHCR representative, Desiree Massier, annually for information regarding the processing of refugees into El Salvador. Ms. Massier has always been helpful in providing information to the Embassy; she can be reached at (503) 2240-0445.

¶2. On May 8, Poloff spoke with Ms. Massier regarding the projects the UNHCR currently has in El Salvador; she noted that El Salvador is no longer either a major source or recipient of refugees. (Note: There are currently three refugees approved from Colombia, and in addition four Colombians and one Russian have requested refugee status and are undergoing processing procedures. She indicated that the Russian is likely to request permanent placement in Canada. End Note.) Ms. Massier reported that the UNHCR recently had to move their office because the foundation where they were formerly located, the Foundation for the Studies for the Application of the Law (FESPAD), had been advocating against acceptance of refugees. The UNHCR now has its operations at the Anglican Church in San Salvador.

¶3. Sonia Guandique, Deputy to the Ombudsman for Human Rights Office (PDDH), indicates that the UNHCR no longer provides training and technical assistance to the PDDH. According to Doras Rivas of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the current Ombudsman, Beatrice de Carillo, believed that the activities represented a conflict of interest, and prevented her office from making independent decisions at the Committee on Refugee Status (CODER). (Note: The CODER determines which refugees are granted permanent status in El Salvador. End Note.)

¶4. Comment: The UNHCR presence in El Salvador is small, and is likely to remain so due to the relative political stability in the region. Although low levels of refugee processing do not warrant increased engagement with the UNHCR at this time, the Political Section will continue to maintain communication with the UNHCR and others involved in refugee processing.  
Barclay